

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices
10 comprising:
 - a data peripheral system comprising at least one data input/output device;
 - a secure data storage medium;
 - allocation means adapted to allocate a selected storage area in the secure
data storage medium;
 - 15 data communication means adapted for communicating data from the at
least one data input/output device into the selected storage area of secure data storage
medium;
 - accounting means adapted for securing charge information from an
associated user, which charge information allows for securing of payment for use of the
20 data peripheral system;
 - verification means adapted for securing charge verification information
corresponding to charge information received from the associated user; and
 - enabling means adapted for enabling operation of the data peripheral
system in accordance with an output of the verification means so as to provide fee-based
25 access of the associated user to the peripheral system.
2. The system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral
devices of claim 1 further comprising means adapted for storing an access control list,
which access control list dictates an identity of users authorized to access data stored in
30 the selected storage area of the secure data storage medium.
3. The system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral
devices of claim 1 further comprising means adapted for selectively de-allocating the
selected storage area in the secure data storage medium after expiration of a preselected

5 duration.

4. The system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 1 wherein the data peripheral system includes at least one of a printer, facsimile, scanning device, character recognition system, and storage device.

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5. The system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 1 further comprising means adapted for selecting parameters for a selected data processing operation undertaken in connection with the data stored in the secure data storage medium.

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6. The system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 1 wherein the charge information includes information associated with at least one of a pre-paid debit card, coupon, and credit card.

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7. The system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 1 further comprising tracking means adapted for tracking the user's usage of the data peripheral system and cost generating means adapted for receiving an output from the tracking means and generating a cost for the user's usage of the data peripheral system.

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8. The system for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 7 further comprising billing means adapted for receiving an output from the cost generating means and applying the output to the user's charge information.

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9. A method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices comprising the steps of:

allocating a selected storage area in a secure data storage medium;

communicating data from at least one data input/output device in a data peripheral system into the selected storage area of secure data storage medium;

5 securing charge information from an associated user, which charge
information allows for securing of payment for use the data peripheral system;
 securing charge verification information corresponding to charge
information received from the associated user; and
 enabling operation of the data peripheral system in accordance with an
10 output of the verification means so as to provide fee-based access of the associated user to
the peripheral system.

10. The method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral
devices of claim 9 further comprising the step of storing an access control list, which
15 access control list dictates an identity of users authorized to access data stored in the
selected storage area of the secure data storage medium.

11. The method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral
devices of claim 9 further comprising the step of selectively de-allocating the selected
20 storage area in the secure data storage medium after expiration of a preselected duration.

12. The method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral
devices of claim 9 wherein the data peripheral system includes at least one of a printer,
facsimile, scanning device, character recognition system, and storage device.

25 13. The method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral
devices of claim 9 further comprising the step of selecting parameters for a selected data
processing operation undertaken in connection with the data stored in the secure data
storage medium.

30 14. The method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral
devices of claim 9 wherein the charge information includes information associated with at
least one of a pre-paid debit card, coupon, and credit card.

5 15. The method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 9 further comprising the step of tracking the user's usage of the data peripheral system and generating a cost for the user's usage of the data peripheral system.

10 16. The method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 15 further comprising the step of applying the generated cost to the user's charge information.

15 17. A computer-readable medium for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices comprising:
a data peripheral system comprising at least one data input/output device;
a secure data storage medium;
allocation means adapted to allocate a selected storage area in the secure data storage medium;
data communication means adapted for communicating data from the at
20 least one data input/output device into the selected storage area of secure data storage medium;
accounting means adapted for securing charge information from an associated user, which charge information allows for securing of payment for use of the data peripheral system;
25 verification means adapted for securing charge verification information corresponding to charge information received from the associated user; and
enabling means adapted for enabling operation of the data peripheral system in accordance with an output of the verification means so as to provide fee-based access of the associated user to the peripheral system.

30 18. The computer-readable medium for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 17 further comprising means adapted for storing an access control list, which access control list dictates an identity of users authorized to access data stored in the selected storage area of the secure data storage medium.

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19. The computer-readable medium for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 17 further comprising means adapted for selectively de-allocating the selected storage area in the secure data storage medium after expiration of a preselected duration.

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20. The computer-readable medium for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 17 wherein the charge information includes information associated with at least one of a pre-paid debit card, coupon, and credit card.

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21. The computer-readable medium for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 17 further comprising tracking means adapted for tracking the user's usage of the data peripheral system and cost generating means adapted for receiving an output from the tracking means and generating a cost for the user's usage of the data peripheral system.

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22. The computer-readable medium for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices of claim 21 further comprising billing means adapted for receiving an output from the cost generating means and applying the output to the user's charge information.

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23. A computer-implemented method for providing fee-based access to shared data peripheral devices comprising the steps of:

allocating a selected storage area in a secure data storage medium;

communicating data from at least one data input/output device in a data

30 peripheral system into the selected storage area of secure data storage medium;

securing charge information from an associated user, which charge information allows for securing of payment for use the data peripheral system;

securing charge verification information corresponding to charge information received from the associated user; and

5 enabling operation of the data peripheral system in accordance with an
output of the verification means so as to provide fee-based access of the associated user to
the peripheral system.

24. The computer-implemented method for providing fee-based access to
10 shared data peripheral devices of claim 23 further comprising the step of storing an access
control list, which access control list dictates an identity of users authorized to access data
stored in the selected storage area of the secure data storage medium.

25. The computer-implemented method for providing fee-based access to
15 shared data peripheral devices of claim 23 further comprising the step of selectively de-
allocating the selected storage area in the secure data storage medium after expiration of a
preselected duration.

26. The computer-implemented method for providing fee-based access to
20 shared data peripheral devices of claim 23 wherein the charge information includes
information associated with at least one of a pre-paid debit card, coupon, and credit card.

27. The computer-implemented method for providing fee-based access to
shared data peripheral devices of claim 23 further comprising the step of tracking the
25 user's usage of the data peripheral system and generating a cost for the user's usage of the
data peripheral system.

28. The computer-implemented method for providing fee-based access to
shared data peripheral devices of claim 27 further comprising the step of applying the
30 generated cost to the user's charge information.